

MUSEUM EXHIBITION
USES SPACE IN ART
AS DOMINANT THEME

Fundamental contemporary approaches to the concept of space are presented in an exhibition which opened in Gallery 26 of The Cleveland Museum of Art on Tuesday. It closes January 19, 1964.

Included are six oils by James Brooks, Joseph Albers and Ellsworth Kelly, five sculptures by Alexander Calder and Lee Bontecou and one drawing by Bontecou.

They, and their contemporaries, attack the complicated problem of defining space on a surface and at the same time trying to compose in depth to produce multi-dimensional arrangements. This attack is in contrast with the Renaissance concept which suggested space on a surface by using linear and aerial perspective. In the 19th century Cézanne ushered in the modern concept of space by effectively developing a counterpoint of space and surface.

Each artist in the exhibit develops space in his own way. The cold and clear paintings of James Brooks almost invariably reveal a masterly control of overlapping, superimposed planes, sharply contrasted contours and softly blurred edges. His forms are rhythmical and floating.

Joseph Albers' well-known experiments with color and geometry, although, restricted to a few geometrical arrangements, have lead to an endless variety of optical effects. Subtle adjustments of relationships between shapes and color force a central square to advance out from the canvas, or recede into the distance, or to do both alternately. A simple hue, like yellow, can, in relation to surrounding colors, seem to sing or to scream.

Ellsworth Kelly's oils show free shapes, assymetrical arrangements, clear, pure hues and chromatic tensions. Some canvases suggest ambiguous space as adjacent areas of intense color seem to travel in and out. Others have an air of serenity as the

space seems to move beyond the picture plane which is established by the least intense hue; hues of greater intensity seem to advance outward from the surface.

In sculpture Alexander Calder helped pioneer in making space the medium. (Sculpture displaced space in the Renaissance tradition.) Calder's mobiles define space with jointed struts and metal shapes which can be moved about by random currents of air in an almost infinite variety of combinations.

Lee Bontecou works with construction in space by enclosing it within complex and ordered forms composed of welded metal rods covered with canvas. The apertures provide a glimpse of dark inner regions which are highly expressive and which provoke feelings of ominous presence.

A pamphlet-catalog with text describing the show is available in the exhibition gallery. Some of the works are for sale.